



NAPA Know How

Lamp Bulbs/Fuse Replacement

Every electrical current in your car is protected with fuses or circuit breakers. Replacing the fuse is the first step in determining if there is a real problem in the circuit or only a bad fuse.

There are actually two types of automotive fuse: glass tube or blade. If your car was made before, say 1980 or so, you probably have the tube style fuses. These are actually available in either the very old glass tube, or the slightly more modern plastic mount. Both of these are shaped like a small torpedo and are easy to install. The other type, and the kind of fuse you most likely have in your car, is the blade style. These plug into your fuse box. Check to see what type of fuse you have so that you can keep a few spares around.

Things you'll need from your garage or your local NAPA AUTO PARTS Store:

- Needle Nose pliers
- Fuse puller
- Replacement fuses
- Test light

Locate your car's fuse panel.

The fuse panel can be located under the dashboard, on either side of the dash side panel or under the rear seat. These days many cars have multiple panels for fuses. Whether your car has one fuse box or multiples, it will have at least one in the passenger compartment. It is usually located just in front of your left knee, if you're sitting in the driver's seat. The fuses will be hidden behind a plastic cover, but it's usually marked clearly. Open the cover and you should see a row of different colored fuses inside. You will also find a diagram on the cover that shows you which fuse goes to what. Always consult the owner's manual for correct fuse type and locations.

Knowing what item is not working in the car, look on the panel cover, or on the panel itself, to locate the fuse that protects the item's circuit.

Use a fuse puller to remove the fuse.

If you have a test light, you can first test the fuse by checking for voltage on both of its sides.

Investigate the fuse after you remove it.

If the fuse is darkened or you do not see a small wire inside, the fuse is open or burned out. If it's blown, you'll see a melted "bridge" going between the two blades. If it's not blown, and you know you have located the right fuse, you'll need to do a more complete electrical analysis or take your car to a NAPA AutoCare Center near you.

Replace the bad fuse with a new fuse of the same ampere rating.

They are both color coded and imprinted according to amperage, so if you install the same color fuse you're in good shape. There might be spare fuses on the fuse cover or stored in the fuse panel. If not, you must purchase a replacement at your local NAPA AUTO PARTS Store.

Test the item in your car that was not working to make sure that solved the problem.

If you have not solved the problem, check the fuse box under the hood. It's usually very easy to find and get to, with a diagram on the top telling you what fuses are inside. In addition to the regular blade type fuses, you might also see some really big fuses that protect your car's entire electrical system.

The procedure for replacing a fuse under the hood is the same as under the dash. Find the fuse that's blown, pull it out, and install the new one.

Important Tips:

Your car owner's manual can assist you in locating the fusebox in your car. There may be more than one fusebox.

Fuses blow because the circuit suffered from too much current flow. Always seek help to find out why the fuse failed.

Your NAPA AutoCare Center can help you here.

Always replace fuses with fuses that have the same ampere rating. A larger ampere rated fuse will not protect the circuit correctly and could cause further damage to the circuit and wiring.